

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 8, which is the compound (2) represented by the formula (II) wherein n is zero to 20; R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 13 to 21 carbon atoms; X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms or an alkenyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently amended) A plant-activating composition comprising a plant-activating agent in a concentration of 0.01 to 500 ppm and at least one of a surfactant and a chelating agent, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 15 to 19 carbon atoms; X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30.

7. (Previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the surfactant is selected from a nonionic surfactant, an anionic surfactant and an amphoteric surfactant.

8. (Currently amended) A method of activating a plant by applying a plant-activating composition to the plant, said plant-activating composition is capable of promoting growth of the plant by itself and comprises a plant activating agent in a concentration of 0.01 to 500 ppm and at least one of a surfactant and a chelating agent, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



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wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 15 to 19 carbon atoms; X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms or an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) A plant-activating composition comprising a plant-activating agent and a fertilizer component, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms or an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30; and wherein the plant-activating agent is in an aqueous solution or aqueous dispersion and is in a concentration of 0.01 to 500 ppm.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently amended) The composition as claimed in claim 6 or 25, wherein the plant-activating agent is in an aqueous solution or aqueous dispersion and with the proviso that when the chelating agent is a salt of EDTA, the salt is a sodium salt.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) The composition as claimed in claim 6 or 25, wherein the chelating agent is at least one selected from the group consisting of citric acid, gluconic acid, malic acid, heptonic acid, oxalic acid, malonic acid, lactic acid, tartaric acid, succinic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, adipic acid, glutaric acid, polycarboxylic acid, potassium salt of a polycarboxylic acid, sodium salt of a polycarboxylic acid, an aliphatic amine salt of a polycarboxylic acid,

ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), nitrilotriacetic acid (NTA) and cyclohexanediaminetetraacetic acid (CDTA).

15. (Currently amended) The composition as claimed in claim 6 or 25, wherein the composition comprises 10 to 20,000 parts by weight of the surfactant and zero to 10,000 parts by weight of the chelating agent per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

16. (Previously Presented) The composition as claimed in claim 10, wherein said composition comprises 10 to 5,000 parts by weight of the fertilizer component per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

17. (Previously Presented) The composition as claimed in claim 15, wherein the composition further comprises 10 to 5,000 parts by weight of other nutrients per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

18. (Previously Presented) The composition as claimed in claim 16, wherein said composition further comprises 10 to 5,000 parts by weight of other nutrients per 100 parts by weight of the activating agent.

19. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 8, 27 or 28, wherein the plant activating agent promotes permeation.

20. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim [[8,]] 27 or 28, wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 13 to 29 carbon atoms.

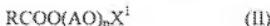
21. (Currently amended) The composition as claimed in claim [[6,]] 25, wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 13 to 29 carbon atoms.

22. (Previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 10, wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 13 to 29 carbon atoms.

23. (New) The composition as claimed in claim 6, wherein the surfactant is at least one selected from the group consisting of a sorbitan fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene sorbitan fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene fatty acid ester, glycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene glycerol fatty acid ester, polyglycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene polyglycerol fatty acid ester, sucrose fatty acid ester, resin acid ester and polyoxyalkylene resin acid ester.

24. (New) The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the surfactant is at least one selected from the group consisting of a sorbitan fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene sorbitan fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene fatty acid ester, glycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene glycerol fatty acid ester, polyglycerol fatty acid ester, polyoxyalkylene polyglycerol fatty acid ester, sucrose fatty acid ester, resin acid ester and polyoxyalkylene resin acid ester.

25. (New) A plant-activating composition comprising a plant-activating agent in a concentration of 0.01 to 500 ppm and at least one of a surfactant and a chelating agent, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30, wherein the surfactant is at least one selected from the group consisting of an ester group-containing nonionic surfactant, anionic surfactant, cationic surfactant and amphoteric surfactant.

26. (New) The composition as claimed in claim 25, which is the compound (2) represented by the formula (II) wherein n is zero to 20; R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 13 to 21 carbon atoms, X¹ represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 22 carbon atoms or an alkenyl group having 2 to 22 carbon atoms.

27. (New) A method of activating a plant by applying a plant-activating composition to the plant, said plant-activating composition is capable of promoting growth of the plant by itself and comprises a plant activating agent in a concentration of 0.01 to 500 ppm and at least one of a surfactant and a chelating agent, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X^{\dagger} represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms or an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30, wherein the surfactant is at least one selected from the group consisting of an ester group-containing nonionic surfactant, anionic surfactant, cationic surfactant and amphoteric surfactant.

28. (New) A method of activating a plant by spraying a plant-activating composition on phylloplanes of the plant, said plant-activating composition is capable of promoting growth of the plant by itself and comprises a plant activating agent in a concentration of 0.01 to 500 ppm and at least one of a surfactant and a chelating agent, said plant-activating agent is a compound of formula (II),



wherein R represents an alkyl or alkenyl group having 11 to 29 carbon atoms; X^{\dagger} represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl or acyl group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms or an alkenyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms, or a counter ion; AO represents at least one group selected from oxyethylene, oxypropylene and oxybutylene groups and may be random or block; and n represents an average number of moles added and is zero to 30.

29. (New) The method as claimed in claim 28, wherein the surfactant is selected from a nonionic surfactant, an anionic surfactant and an amphoteric surfactant.